

Many people are surprised by extra "mandatory" insurance fees while renting a car in Costa Rica. Here is our Expert Guide on How to Rent a Car Cheaply and Safely in Costa Rica.

STEP 1

Look at our favorite aggregating site, <u>rentalcars.com</u>, at least once a week before you leave home. If you are renting for high season, confirm your reservation as soon as possible.

STEP 2

The fine print. There you'll see that GPS units are extra. You don't need one! Use <u>waze.com</u> free on the internet or the Waze app on your smartphone.

STEP 3

More fine print. CALL about rental car insurance ahead of time. A popular scam is to quote a low price for a rental car, and then charge additional collision, damage and third party liability insurance, equal to or greater than the original rental rate quoted, at the time of pickup.

How to avoid these charges:

- Search Google with the name of the provider and location and get the local office phone number. They will have someone
 who speaks English. Confirm if there are additional insurance charges. Get the response in writing.
- ✓ Talk to your own insurance agent, or go online, and print out proof of your coverage for liability.
- Some of you may also be covered through your Visa Signature, MasterCard or American Express premium credit cards if
 you use those to rent the car. Print out proof of your coverage.
- If the local agent you talk with gives you too hard a time and tells you that this additional coverage is mandatory, tell them that you will rent somewhere else. Then do it.

Additional Expert Tips:

High Season

Negotiating is easier before December 26. If you are visiting from December 26 until Easter (high season), supply will be tighter and prices will be higher.

A CONTRACT OF THE CONTRACT OF

River Crossing - WARNING!

River crossing is NEVER covered by the additional insurance coverage you buy from the rental car companies in Costa Rica. If you cross a river and flood the engine, this could total the car and you'd be liable for replacement value of the entire vehicle. Vehicles in Costa Rica cost on average 50%-100% MORE than they do in the United States due to import taxes. So cross rivers at your own risk unless you have additional coverage! Plus, it only takes one inch too much of water to carry you out to sea.

Private Rentals

- ✓ If you do not like the best rate you get, ask around about private rentals.
- ✓ They should come with full insurance, but you are not dealing with a company.
- ✓ You need to get proof of their insurance in writing, and make sure it is commercial insurance.
- ▼ This is similar to dealing with AirBNB or Uber, except with a rental car. Just like with Uber, be careful out there. Not everyone is reliable, trustworthy etc. We can help when you stay here at The Oaks.

Not renting for your entire trip

Many of you might not need a car for all of your stay. For example, if you are staying at The Oaks Tamarindo:

- ✓ Buses stop in front of The Oaks every hour.
- ✓ We have a list of reliable taxis that the front gate guard can provide you. Taxi rates are negotiable and should not be more than \$10 to go to downtown Tamarindo, or \$15 for a round trip to the high-end supermarket AutoMercado on the way to Tamarindo.
- ✓ Tour operators will pick up and drop off at the front gate of The Oaks, so if you arrive tired, you may want to take an afternoon catamaran tour of the beaches the first day, and will not need a car.
- ✓ A half day driving tour with a driver also is a good way to locate the best "off the beaten path" beaches.

